

Post **GREETERS** at the front door as well. Besides ensuring the visitor signs in, have the greeters talk with newcomers; find out their interest(s), introduce them around, explain the squadron and the meeting and pass out some written material. Finally, a handshake and "Thank you for visiting. Hope you're here next week." **FOLLOW UP** with a phone call before the next meeting.

13. **Recruit Parents.** Parents can be a rich source of Senior Members. Their natural interest in the program due to their child's participation makes them an ideal audience. Make parents feel welcome as soon as their cadet(s) join. Fostering an early interest will lead to a lasting relationship. Encourage them to get involved with the unit. Make sure they know the commander (and his or her phone number) and parents of other cadets.

A "Parent's Night" is a good way to do this. Provide a calendar of events. If it changes, tell them. Encourage them to always check times, dates, chaperones, etc. Make sure adult supervision is waiting for the cadets when parents are delivering a child to an activity.

There is also the Cadet Sponsor Member (CSM) category of membership. This membership category is for parents or guardians of cadet(s) who do not want to become full-fledged senior members. They remain members as long as their cadet is a member.

14. **Assign an experienced member to each new member.** The experienced member can act as a mentor to the new member. This provides a familiar face and someone to answer questions. A sense of belonging is critical to retention and this is one of the best ways to do that.

This is not a complete guide with all of the answers. It is a starting point for the Command Personnel of a Squadron.

For Minnesota Wing to grow it must attract and retain the finest possible members that it can. Squadron Commanders and the members of the squadron make that happen. Minnesota Wing/RS can help squadrons with their Recruiting and Retention Efforts by

1. Help Plan Unit Recognition Events
2. Help Units contact inactive members.
3. Conduct Staff Assistance Visits to units
4. Conducting the Annual Recruiting and Retention Retreat.
5. Recruiting Team Assistance
6. Stage Wing Level Recruiting Events
7. Recruiter Training
8. Wing Level Recognition of Recruiters
9. Resource Repository
10. Recruiting & Retention Website
11. Wing level "Join CAP" Website

Don't hesitate to contact WingHq/RS for help with your Retention Program. This is why we are here. Units and members are our priority.

**We are from Wing and we are here to help you!**

Minnesota Wing  
Recruiting and Retention

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MN Wing Recruiting & Retention Website  
**[www.mnwg.cap.gov/rs](http://www.mnwg.cap.gov/rs)**

MN Wing Join CAP Website  
**[www.mnwg.cap.gov/joincap](http://www.mnwg.cap.gov/joincap)**

# Retention is JOB 1!



## A Guide to Member Retention

Minnesota Wing/RS  
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Retention simply means keeping the people that you and your unit recruit.

CAP is not a cheap organization to belong to and members will renew and pay their dues again only if they are satisfied and feel that they have received value throughout the year.

Your members will base their perceptions of value on their interaction with the leaders and other members of your unit, and the opportunities your unit and the Wing provides.

Explain the job description to your members--mentor and encourage them. Support them in their Specialty Track and in their Cadet Training. Make them feel like a cog in the wheel!

Insist that your members interact with each other and help each other out in their CAP careers.

Remember that if you lose a member, you must recruit two new members to grow. However, if you keep a member, you only have to recruit one to grow. Here are some tips on how to keep your members.

**1. ACTIVITIES, ACTIVITIES, ACTIVITIES!** Lack of activity or training is one of the most frequently cited reasons for leaving CAP. Try to have an 'event' at least every six weeks.

It can be anything: a Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX), and Aerospace Education workshop, a day dedicated to getting as many cadets in the air on orientation flights as possible followed by a barbecue, or a bowling/pizza party (very good for morale and cohesiveness building). Many units already do this as a 5<sup>th</sup> week meeting social activity.

**2. COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!** No one wants to be kept in the dark (the mushroom principle). Minnesota Wing has a Wing E-mail List, which contains the email addresses the majority of the wing's members. This is on the secure webserver. You can use it to

send a single email or mass email targeted to entire squadrons, groups, or specific personnel such as: all unit commanders or CAC members.

There are also specific e-mail lists for the entire wing that as a member you should subscribe. You can use the Wing E-mail List for standard day-to-day written communication. If you have an event that needs to be publicized, use the Wing Calendar, maintained by the Wing Plans and Programs Section.

In addition to all the high-tech internet stuff, talk to your Group Commander regularly and pass on to your squadron what was said about upcoming events.

Don't forget about your Squadron's Web Site and the Newsletter. For some this is the only contact they have with CAP.

**3. PLAN, PLAN, PLAN.** A meeting conducted with last-minute planning looks like it has been planned at the last minute. It shows a lack of respect to members and the time and money they have spent to be in CAP. Unplanned meetings are BORING -- and people quit!

**4. Set the example.** Haircut, uniform, insignias sewn on properly, boots shined -- all according to the 'book' (CAPM 39-1). Otherwise, how can you expect members to do the same.

**5. Award all decorations as soon as they are earned...** and make a big deal out of it! Doing so encourages others to achieve the same. Take lots of pictures. Post some on the bulletin board or scrapbook and give copies to the member.

**6. Make a big deal out of promotions!** (see #5 above)

**7. Always do what you say you will do when you say you will do it.** If you can't, explain why you cannot as soon as possible. Don't assume the members know why. Personal contact is the key to retention. A phone call or e-mail can do wonders.

**8. Require adherence to customs and courtesies** Many cadets are attracted to CAP because of the "military" ambiance and a desire for the structure and discipline CAP offers.

They also want the responsibility and the chance to prove that they "can do" and do it well. CAP offers young people the opportunity to be trained in CPR, First Aid, navigation (day and night), crash site procedures, radio communications, traffic control, close order drill, direction finding for Emergency Locator Transmitters, and lots more.

These people are proud of their accomplishments. They want to be recognized through these accomplishments in a society that may see them simply as 'teenagers' and all that implies.

**9. Appreciate them for what they are!** Cadets (and Seniors) come in all shapes and sizes, all colors and backgrounds, rich and poor, good solid families and some not so good. All members have the potential to achieve and contribute. Many cadets come from single family homes and need the gap filled in with someone they can trust who respects them.

**10. Make sure they know they are appreciated!** Don't let a good member "burn out" -- a simple slap on the back, a "Job well done," or a recognition certificate can keep a member on the verge of quitting from taking that final step.

**11. Give every new member something to do -- RIGHT AWAY!!** Most of them come to us asking (or at least thinking) "What can I do to help?" Keep handy a "to do" list of things a newcomer can do. If the newcomer doesn't feel needed or welcome, he or she won't come back. Have new members schedule guests for safety meetings as well as think up topics of discussion. The logistics alone will keep them busy.

**12. Be sure and GREET the new arrival** who slips in the door at your meeting. He or she doesn't know a soul in the place. Have a visitor sign-in sheet at the front door.